

U.S. Sen. Baldwin, Colleagues: Urge DHS, FBI to notify state and local law enforcement of rising threats against election workers

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) joined 21 of her colleagues in urging the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to notify state and local law enforcement of rising threats against election workers and to highlight the federal resources available to election officials for reporting and mitigating threats.

“We write to express our continued concern about the alarming rise in threats against election workers and to request that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) take steps to increase awareness of this disturbing trend among local law enforcement,” **the senators wrote to Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas and FBI Director Christopher Wray.** “According to recently released studies, nearly one in three election workers have reported that they feel unsafe because of their job, approximately one in six have received threats of violence, and nearly one in three know at least one colleague who quit their job out of concern for their safety. The onslaught of threats against election workers is unacceptable and raises serious concerns about state and local governments’ ability to recruit and retain election workers needed to administer future elections.”

“Based on our discussions with election officials, we request that DHS and FBI consider issuing a joint Public Service Announcement (PSA) and distributing it to local law enforcement agencies to ensure that they are aware of both the recent increase in these threats against election officials and federal resources for

reporting and countering them,” **the senators continued.** “With the 2022 election cycle underway and the November general election quickly approaching, it is vital that election workers and law enforcement at all levels understand the federal support and resources available to them to protect themselves and our democracy.”

The letter was led by Senators Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) and Dick Durbin (D-IL), and other signers included Senators Gary Peters (D-MI), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Mark Warner (D-VA), Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Alex Padilla (D-CA), Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Jack Reed (D-RI), Ed Markey (D-MA), Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), Cory Booker (D-NJ), and Benjamin Cardin (D-MD).

The full text of the letter is available [here](#) and below:

Dear Secretary Mayorkas and Director Wray:

We write to express our continued concern about the alarming rise in threats against election workers and to request that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) take steps to increase awareness of this disturbing trend among local law enforcement.

According to recently released studies, nearly one in three election workers have reported that they feel unsafe because of their job, approximately one in six have received threats of violence, and nearly one in three know at least one colleague who quit their job out of concern for their safety. The onslaught of threats against election workers is unacceptable and raises serious concerns about state and local governments' ability to recruit and retain election workers needed to administer future elections. In fact, one study released earlier last month found that one in five election officials are unlikely to continue to serve until the 2024 election.

Federal agencies have taken important steps to address these threats, including the Department of Justice (DOJ) establishing the Election Threats Task Force in coordination with the FBI, but more must be done. It is critical that election workers are familiar with available federal resources and that federal and local law enforcement understand the scope and severity of the threats election officials are facing so that they can respond effectively and promptly.

We have heard that many election workers are not aware of federal resources to help them address these threats, and a study from March 2022 indicated that a majority of election workers are unfamiliar with the Task Force's work. Additionally, we have heard that in many cases when election officials report threats, local law enforcement agencies treat them as isolated incidents, instead of as part of a growing nationwide trend.

Based on our discussions with election officials, we request that DHS and FBI consider issuing a joint Public Service Announcement (PSA) and distributing it to local law enforcement agencies to ensure that they are aware of both the recent increase in these threats against election officials and federal resources for reporting and countering them. A PSA could provide important information, including an overview of the threat landscape, recommendations to mitigate the threat, instructions for reporting threats, and available federal resources - similar to the September 2020 PSA warning that the FBI issued with the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency about cybercriminals and disinformation likely to target election results. We also ask that DHS's Office for State and Local Law Enforcement and the FBI consider making similar resources for local law enforcement agencies and field offices available online.

With the 2022 election cycle underway and the November general election quickly approaching, it is vital that election workers and law enforcement at all levels understand the federal support and resources available to them to protect themselves and our democracy. We appreciate the support DHS provides to state and local election officials and the work the FBI has done with DOJ's Election Threats Task Force, and we look forward to continuing to work with federal agencies to ensure the safety of election officials and workers across the country.

Thank you for your attention to this serious matter.